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Perfection of Wisdom



Newsletter



While words like ‘karma’, ‘nirvana’ and even ‘samsara’ have made it into popular speech these days in English-speaking cultures, their meanings have remained predictably confused for the average person. Like monastic life itself perhaps, their real meanings imply an understanding of things which is rare for any person to grasp. So I’m not surprised when I’m sometimes asked if I’m a Shaolin Kung Fu adept, or if we brew cider and ale at the monastery or sell tapestries, crafted things and honey. What do monks or nuns *do*, most people must think, picturing friars. Pray all day?

Of course, the monastic vocation for disciples of the Buddha is generally not one of prayer (in the way that word is usually meant), instead it’s primarily for the cultivation of awareness. Through restraint, meditation and investigation, acting in wholesome ways; the nurturing of wisdom that leads to release is what we try to spend our time doing. This requires little more than taking care of the body and living simply, without a need to supplement our daily routine with activities, creative or otherwise. Yet, while for the Sangha our training precludes some kinds of creative expression, such as making music and dancing, there are others that when developed in a contemplative way can support a calm mind and reflection. Those who appreciate words and speech may benefit through work with the verbal symbols of poetry. And for those more visually oriented, painting perhaps, or ... sculpture.

This at least has become a part of Ajahn Vimalo’s life of practice. Having begun when a layman, with no prior background in the necessary skills except the eye and the hand for detail he needed as a professional photo retoucher, Aj. Vimalo (then called Paul Hendrick, and already a longtime supporter of Luang Por Sumedho’s Sangha) began by making a small Buddha image or two. He then embarked on a labour of love that would last over 20 years, from seeing a picture in a book of the famous Javan Prajna Paramita, to finishing his own interpretation based on an exact replica, forming a mould himself and proceeding to cast his own copies.

Three have already been made, and another will follow: Prajna images for Cittaviveka, Amaravati, the siladhara nuns’ community and, it now looks like another will be heading to India to the Tibetan nunnery being built by Tenzin Palmo. Ajahn Vimalo plans to continue until the end of this year as long as he has enough materials, and then, finally, stop the work.

Prajna Paramita means the ‘perfection of wisdom’ (Sanskrit for the Pali, *pañña parami*). In Mahayana Buddhist traditions it became associated with important teachings, and was often represented in a female form. As abbot of Cittaviveka Monastery and one who was responsible for ‘commissioning’ Ajahn Vimalo’s continued work on the image, Ajahn Sucitto was asked to write a few paragraphs about it, and the recent occasion where the Prajna was installed in the Cittaviveka Dhamma Hall.

Although it might appear that renouncing song and dance is a kind of prudish fearful movement away from the natural energies of life, those who practise Dhamma know that, far from running away from the feelings we’ve stopped acting out, renunciation is a tool that serves to bring them closer into focus. We then have an option other than suppression on the one hand and expression on the other. Ajahn Thanasanti speaks very well about this in her words on *Celibacy and Sublimation*.

Also, Ajahn Karuniko, the second most senior monk at Chithurst, shares his recent experiences on pilgrimage to some of the sacred sites of Sri Lanka. Noting how grateful he felt to be in a culture where the saffron robe is recognized and appreciated, I thought myself how far along things have come towards greater familiarity here in Europe. These days we are at least usually recognized as belonging to something monastic. Yet I remember an example some years ago when our monks were taken for something different, by a group of local punk rockers on a city train in Bern. ‘Where are you from?’, they asked, and the monks responded, ‘England.’ Keen to know the latest underground fashion the punks pointed to the monks’ robes and asked with interest, ‘So, is that what they’re wearing in London?’

With all best wishes for the Vassa,
Bhikkhu Jayanto

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Prajna Paramita



Ajahn Vimalo

When I was a layman supporting the Sangha Sister Thanissara showed me a picture in a book and told me Luang Por Sumedho had wondered if I could copy the image in the photo. I think he knew I had the ability to copy anything that was put in front of me. It was an image of the Prajna Paramita, a famous masterpiece from Java, Indonesia. It was so long ago now that Luang Por can't remember this.

I saw that the statue was housed in the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, Holland. I told one of my closest friends, who is also an artist, of my interest and we decided to go to Holland for a weekend.

The city of Leiden was just up my street in terms of my interests. Having once owned a windmill I'd be able to visit De Valk ('The Falcon') which is a large mill in the middle of town. And with my lifelong love of Egyptian art and history it also afforded me the chance to visit the famous Egyptian collection in Leiden's National Museum of Antiquities.

It worked out that the original Prajna Paramita statue had been returned to Java, it being such an important piece of Buddhist art. What was in the museum in

Leiden was their own plaster cast copy. Ah, I thought: even though it was an old cast maybe they would let us make another copy. They said no. I then said to myself, right oh! I will copy it – not thinking what I was taking on, for it is one of the most detailed pieces of art there is.

I was very lucky in that the deputy curator was a very kind lady who got permission for me to take many photos and measurements of their statue. I needed special permission because it was locked up in a room with lots of ancient gold jewellery. From the measurements I'd be able to work out a frame to make a copied image of my own. This was many years ago now but I have a clear memory because it was such a rewarding weekend in many ways.

In the ensuing months I worked on my Prajna at home when I had time. I had even taken note of the many different sized beads she has on. I had not studied SE Asian art, so much of the jewellery style I had to guess from the photos as to how it would appear, and the hair down her back I made up because I hadn't taken a photo of that.



Side view of one of the casts, showing some of the detailed jewellery, and the Prajna's hair, which Aj. Vimalo had to guess at because he hadn't recorded it



A photograph of the original statue in Java (right) and one of the casts (left)

Well, when I turned forty I parted from my family and travelled for eight months leaving the Prajna at Amaravati. After my travels I became an anagarika, which allowed me an hour or so now and then when I could continue work on the Prajna. But it was hard to do as an anagarika.

After 18 months as an anagarika I decided to take ordination in Thailand. So Prajna was duly embalmed and put in a cupboard for some 10 years. While I was away she was apparently taken from the embalmed state and unwrapped. I must admit that I was a bit annoyed when I heard this because within the wrapping were also all my photos and notes. Ajahn Sucitto then wrote with the idea of trying to get me back to finish her so she could go to Chithurst. By this time I was in Sri Lanka.

I would often see pictures of Prajna Paramita on book covers, and it was as if something was saying, 'Now come on, time to go back and finish her.' I had also heard that the nuns were very interested in it because Prajna is a female image.



Paul Hendrick (Aj. Vimalo) in the museum in Leiden, Holland, taking measurements from their own original cast in the room full of gold



Back in England: the resulting home-made frame



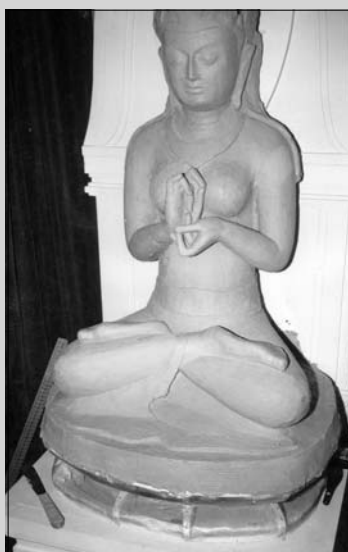
A close-up of one of Ajahn Vimalo's casts. The original figure was damaged in making the rubber mould, which fortunately turned out perfect – enabling high quality copies to be made such as this one

I came back in 2000 thinking that along with everything else I would be able to finish her in a year or two. But in taking on all my new duties she seemed to get put aside from time to time. So I was surprised when one day I realized that she was in fact as finished as she ever would be, knowing that with the materials I had I couldn't perfect her any more than I had.

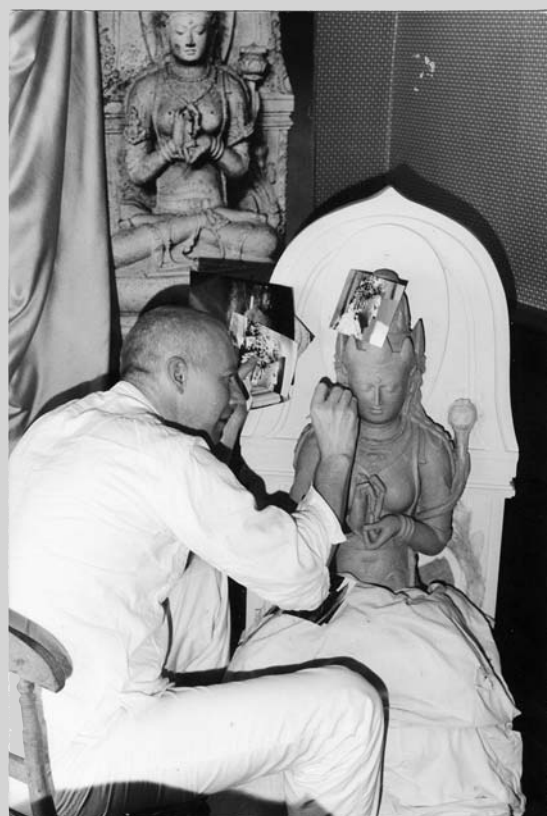
I was concerned about the face. This was because I knew that if the look on the face didn't communicate what I felt it should then it would not be worth much. Even though the original is a masterpiece I have always felt that the face is a bit too harsh. So at a certain point I worked on the face of my Prajna for two days solid. I kept looking at the original, along with a drawing I did of a Gandharan Greek style Buddha and a photo of a Pharaoh who had a beatific smile. After this effort I felt very happy with the look and I felt most of the nuns would as well, which they were.



Coming along: the new image taking shape under the inscrutable gaze of the original. The photographic studio at which Ajahn Vimalo used to work offered to make him the high quality enlargement on the wall



Work on the Prajna slowly takes shape in Paul's house in the UK



Ajahn Vimalo as an eight-precept layman continuing the work at his home. He lived this way for years before taking ordination as an anagarika



Top: The undamaged original Prajna Paramita by Ajahn Vimalo
Bottom: The same figure after being damaged in making the rubber mould



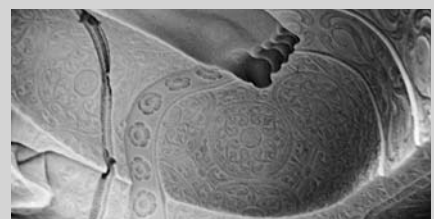
Making the rubber mould. The process begins by applying coats of liquid rubber to the statue

When it came to casting a mould from which to make copies, I looked around at which places might be able to do it best. As the figure is so detailed I knew the work would need to be very carefully executed, in particular to be able to include the hands. I had an offer from a teacher at the British Museum to do it for the cost of materials, over an undefined period of time as he was able to with his students. I had also enquired at one of the top museums in Germany – who are known to be the best at making reproductions – and they said they would love to do it, but though they wished to they couldn't reduce the expensive price it would cost (over 20,000 euros plus shipping!) They were very kind though and offered to give me any advice I needed.

At the same time, I investigated the possibility of doing it myself. I felt that whoever did it might damage it, and if that happened I wanted it to be me! In the end that's what



Aj. Vimalo with the hard plastic casing which covers the rubber mould



Top: Face to face: testing the mould
Bottom: Looking through a part of the rubber mould, with light coming through from the opposite side



Visitors admire the finished rubber coating (above)
Top right and below right: Working on sections for a hard plastic support mould which will act as a supportive casing for the rubber mould

I did. As it happened the original did get damaged, but the mould turned out perfectly and this has allowed me to make copies as planned. (Some people want me to repair the original. But I think it may end up as part of the foundations of a future building.)

All the suppliers of the materials I have needed have also been keenly helpful. When I sent them photos of the Prajna they all remarked on what a difficult job I have taken on. Even more so that I have never worked on this size mould before. They have all said that I can always go to them for advice. Two of them want to put pictures of my work and a possible article in their company newsletters.

As long as I have enough materials I'll work for the rest of this year and then stop. People have been very generous so far, so that should be no problem. It has been a lot of work. Yet it's been greatly rewarding. ☸



Inverted feet and legs ... The finished mould seen from below and looking up through the crown of the head



Looking through the rubber mould. Light coming through from the opposite side has created this interesting effect



Ajahn Vimalo binds the hard plastic support mould to the soft rubber one. This casing is needed so the rubber mould doesn't lose its shape over time stretched by its own weight



Prajna at Cittaviveka

Ajahn Sucitto

On April 11th Ajahn Vimalo's statue of Prajna Paramita ('The Perfection of Wisdom') was formally installed in the Dhamma Hall at Cittaviveka in a ceremony that included the male and female communities of Cittaviveka and Amaravati as well as many lay friends. It was a bright and inspiring occasion, and one that carried a sense of long-awaited completion.

To me, the installation marks the completion of the plans for the Dhamma Hall we drew up over a decade ago. But even before that, I've been interested in the image of Prajna. The origins of this image lie in the group of Mahayana sutras called 'Prajna Paramita' and which includes such well-known discourses as The Heart Sutra and The Diamond Sutra. The main theme of these discourses is that all manifestations, physical, psychological or spiritual, depend on the mutual arising of conditions and as such are 'empty' of independent essence. For example, ice only exists dependent on water and particular degrees of heat and pressure. Water itself depends on hydrogen and oxygen in a particular relationship. Take any of these causal conditions away and the 'substance' ceases to arise. Similarly 'I' arise dependent on physical, psychological and socio-cultural conditions, each of which depend on a de-

scending order of conditions and so on. This principle, later thoroughly expounded by Nagarjuna, is found in the Pali literature as the principle of interdependent arising. In brief nothing exists independently, but one can't say that nothing exists either. This realization brings the mind into the poise of not clinging or pushing away: it is 'empty' of greed, hatred, delusion, views, fixations – and suffering.

The devotion that motivates the cultivation of wisdom is a steady and patient quality, and this has been exemplified by Ajahn Vimalo's long-term commitment to sculpting and casting the statue. No rushed job, this: for years it was housed in a cupboard at Amaravati which I'd check occasionally while Ajahn Vimalo was away in Thailand and Sri Lanka. Occasionally I'd pass on gentle reminders to him by way of letters, but with the recognition that you can't force the pace on such matters.

Meanwhile the Order of Siladhara was also taking shape, and as Prajna has a female form, and Cittaviveka is a mixed-sex community, the image also seemed to be one that could help place this sense of sharing at the heart of our community. As the Dhamma Hall project was sketched out as a place for meditation and teaching



Successful sandstone resin casts of Ajahn Vimalo's Prajna Paramita



Unveiling Prajna in Cittaviveka Dhamma Hall



Readings given during the installation ceremony

that was to be available to the entire community, it seemed obvious to enshrine the image there. With the Theravada image of the Buddha being that which our chanting centres around, we felt the most suitable place for a Mahayana image would be as a complement, rather than adjunct, to that. So the Hall was designed to have Prajna and the Buddha facing each other. With the Buddha in the *samadhi* position and the Prajna presenting the wisdom mudra; with the 'male' form being soft and relaxed, and the 'female' one being sharp and alert, in my mind they present two of the key facets of Dhamma which have to fit together in the experience of each practitioner.

Having the two images as both central but at opposite ends of the Hall also reminds us that an all-round and embracing vision is essential. Now Prajna, Wisdom, is at the entry to the Hall, as an initial reminder that all form is dependently arisen and has no intrinsic self-existence – thus form is 'empty.' She is also the image that a visitor will last see as they leave the Hall. Entering the Hall, one comes to a place where stillness and inner-dwelling is the norm, but on leaving one is reminded to be alert, and to not get deluded by the manifestations of the world. All form is caught in opinions,



Ajahn Sucitto and Ajahn Vimalo: offerings received and accepted on a joyous occasion

in male and female, mine and yours, old and new, and so on. And the conflict of the world is based on supporting one aspect against the other. For me the message of Prajna is that through careful discernment, 'emptiness' can also embrace and value each form that arises. Then, in its own time and place, each apparent thing can be part of a whole that is never seen but sensed in the peace of Dhamma-fruition. ☸



The following reflections, originally published in the book *Freeing the Heart*, are taken from a talk given by

Ajahn Thanasanti

You can be aware of the experience as it arises and watch as it changes and ends of its own accord, or is channelled through skilful sublimation. Once there is mindfulness and a clear comprehension of what is being experienced, options open up.

The energy doesn't have to be blocked or forced. One can allow it to flow through awareness, with attention focused on the whole body or the breath. It is important to know the difference between repression, which doesn't allow the energy to flow, and sublimation, which allows the energy to move through skilful channelling.

By bringing awareness and attention to the breath, release comes from exhalation and vitality from inhalation. When the whole body is kept in mind, energy can flow and become a source of vitality, creativity and radiance. Energy can be released or sublimated through the breath, physical work, long walks or devotional practice. It's important to appreciate how much patience, skill and kindness toward oneself is needed to find one's way through this predicament. Humour helps a lot, but sometimes tears are inevitable.

Even as one becomes more skilful at allowing energy to flow throughout the system, it is necessary to see that ultimately when there is desire, there is suffering – there is 'me' *here* who wants and something *out there* that is supposed to satisfy. It's important to recognize whether one is sublimating in a skilful way and working to transform desire into something useful. There is suffering as long as there is a 'me' here and something out there that we either need to grasp or get rid of.

Sexuality and the way aggression is experienced and expressed need to be understood in order to open up the field of one's experience, and come to terms with what it is to be fully human. It's scary because it takes people into a realm where they feel out of control and where they are confronting things about themselves that aren't congruent with what they think they should be experiencing.

If we want to free the heart from suffering, we need to question our relationship with sexuality in a sincere and genuine way. We need to have the courage to look carefully at the way desire, attachment and power are embedded within our experience. We must see for ourselves what is appropriate and how mindfulness, understanding and restraint can be further cultivated. We

To those interested in understanding the end of suffering, the Buddha recommended seeing the value of celibacy. It is a powerful tool for understanding desire and coming to terms with the nature of attachment. It isn't an easy path, but it can be very helpful because one has to consciously face the habitual patterns of this deep-seated energy.

Celibacy isn't meant to be a repression or denial of one's sexual being, nor a condemnation of sexuality or of sexual relationships. It is not a life-denying experience. The standards of behaviour are clear: our pathway is through insight and understanding, and for me, love. When lived to its full potential, celibacy is a vital, embracing and creative lifestyle in which one is aware of sexuality in all of its manifestations and aware of the way it can be transformed into other types of energy. With celibacy, one is at ease with life as a human being.

Sometimes people think meditation is all about developing clarity, concentration and kindness, and is divorced from coming to terms with primordial energies like sexuality and aggression. Understanding these energies, seeing what sets them off, what brings them into balance, how much they are part and parcel of having a human body and how they can be used once transformed, is important in our aspiration for freedom. Rejecting any aspect of what it is to be alive and to be a human being can be profoundly destructive and affect the way we see and relate to others and ourselves; it has a direct connection to our physical and mental well-being.

Therefore, working with restraint requires that one become familiar with the experience of these feelings and the skilful means one can develop to work with them. Awareness is the key – you first need to allow your attention to rest with the experience. Feel the physical sensations directly in the body: the tightness, increased warmth, change in the texture of the breath. Let your attention rest there. Feel the unpleasantness, the mind contracting, and notice the desire not to experience these feelings. When you can see things as they arise and let your attention rest there, you need not be a slave to your aversions or your desire for fulfilment.

Celibacy & Sublimation

must ask ourselves if there is room for more honesty and integrity.

Each of us has issues that are more difficult to resolve than others and we need to know what they are. I grew up in an environment where being hostile and aggressive wasn't O.K. Coming to terms with these aspects in myself has been difficult because they were not congruent with my view of being a loving, giving and caring person. When there is a lack of familiarity with the energy of anger, it gets screened through thoughts like, 'I don't want to see it, I don't want to know about it, I don't want to deal with it, I don't want it to be there.' Sometimes the thoughts aren't conscious and one suppresses the unacceptable form of energy until one has the courage and strength of mind to wake up to these energies and embrace them with awareness. Then when anger comes it is familiar and no longer terrifies, nor is it used against oneself or others. It doesn't have to go underground.

So what does this have to do with compassion and loving-kindness? Classically it is taught that we first need to have loving-kindness and compassion for ourselves before we are in any position to spread it outwardly. Awareness has an all-embracing quality – whatever the experience, awareness can embrace, know and receive it. Judgement isn't needed; resistance isn't needed. As moods, feelings, bodily sensations, tensions and struggles are held in awareness, the reactive qualities of wanting and not wanting the experience diminish. Compassion comes from opening to suffering with the right perspective. It is not the all-glorious compassion of loving a million people in a distant land. It is the nitty-gritty compassion of being at ease with the things that we experience, whether or not they are to our liking. True loving-kindness isn't the construction of a thought or a feeling. It is the ability to be present with experience on a moment-to-moment basis with awareness – from this perspective, loving-kindness *is* awareness.

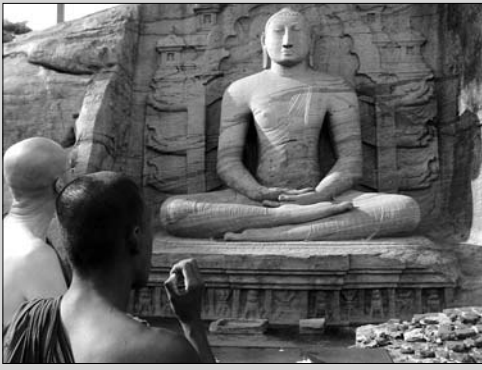
It is important to see that within all experience there is a direct path to the stillness of the heart. Be it rage or the coarsest desire for gratification, within each there is a direct path to the stillness of the heart. A profound change takes place when there is sufficient strength of mind to let awareness embrace the feeling, without either rejecting it or believing it, and without becoming absorbed in it. The identification with experience we

normally have eases up. We no longer need to get something, get rid of something or change our experience in some way in order to find peace, fulfilment and rest; by simply resting in the awareness of the experience, peace, fulfilment and rest are found.

This still, loving heart isn't a lovey-dovey sweet, marshmallow smear one spreads all over the universe – *metta* (loving-kindness) is not a kind of goo. This still, loving heart is real; it is connected and appropriate. This arises when we understand the appropriate actions of body and speech and feel at ease with the full range of what it is to be a human being. As long as one remains cut off from sexuality or aggression, one is denied full access to the heart. Cut off doesn't mean an inability to act out; it means an inability to fully feel and understand the energy, and to allow it to flow and transform. It seems to me that spiritual maturity is when we can see through the veils of the world, the great range of our human experiences, and let everything bring us back to the stillness of the loving heart.

My experience is that the heart does open. Energy that used to be expressed in a sexual or aggressive way still manifests through the heart but is not coloured with the desire for gratification, possession or control. The heart is just open – it's allowing, it's receptive and it's universal. There is no focus on the one that 'I' love or the one that pleases 'me.' It is a bit like loving the whole universe rather than an individual person; it's not the glittery kind of being in love that rejects things that don't fit. It's abiding in love – a still, alive, vital place, a place of rest.

We're not trying to get anybody's attention. We're not trying to dominate or control. We're not trying to live up to the culturally accepted norm of what a woman or a man should be. Within a clearly defined boundary of restraint, we have the encouragement, teachings and support to let the body be the way it is, to allow the energies to be the way they are, to understand them and be at peace with them. We are given the encouragement to know what it is to be alive, to be a human being, to be a woman, to be a man, and to know it fully and completely – not so much so that we can take this as our identity, but so that this knowing can take us to the stillness of a loving and peaceful heart. One of the many blessings of this celibate life is that one doesn't need to be tied up like a pretzel. One can be fully human, utterly alive, and be in peace. ☸



A Sri Lankan Pilgrimage

Ajahn Karuniko

Last January for the first time I had the privilege of visiting some of the ancient Buddhist sites of Sri Lanka. This was at the kind invitation of Venerable Seelagavesi and his devotees in England.

I arrived in Colombo in the late afternoon and in the early evening was driven to Kandy, the famous city in the mountainous centre of the island. It was a joy for me to see the many shrines by the roadside along the way, with their serene Buddha statues. Ever since my first visit to Asia, to Thailand, Burma and India as a layman in 1980, I have appreciated the benefit of composing the mind and bowing as a gesture of respect to the Triple Gem at sacred shrines. I was inspired then to purchase a Buddha image and set up a small shrine in my room on my return to England, which had provided a supportive focus for my developing meditation practice. On the road this time to Kandy I felt happy once again to be in a country where people have faith in the Triple Gem and the saffron robe is appreciated, and to see images that can remind us of our potential as human beings to be peaceful and awake and go beyond suffering.

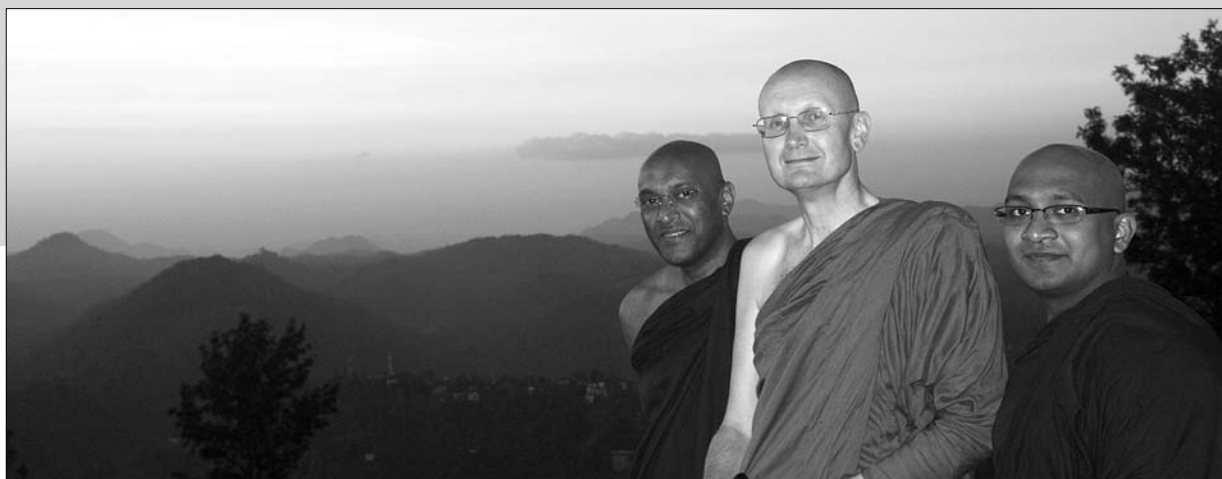
The following morning I was taken to the Temple of the Tooth Relic, one of Sri Lanka's most revered sacred places which enshrines a tooth of the Lord Buddha. Even with so many people who had come to make offerings the atmosphere of devotion was pleasant and composed. Someone gave me a lotus, which I joyfully offered at the shrine – and the joy continued as other people came forward with lotuses for me to offer. These beautiful lotuses that rise above the 'impurities' of the muddy pond, symbolizing the potential we have to rise above the impurities of the mind. We then had an op-

portunity to view the ornate golden *stupa* at the centre of the temple that contains the Relic of the Tooth. As I bowed my head with hands in *anjali* to the Tooth Relic it felt like a particularly potent time to bring forth noble aspirations, for example to always be born where the Triple Gem exists and the Dhamma is practised, and to realize what the Lord Buddha realized.

As the pilgrimage continued I had the opportunity to visit, pay homage, meditate and chant *parittas* at many wonderful sacred sites, with Bodhi trees, large, beautifully serene Buddha images modern and old, towering stupas and large ancient monastic complexes which housed up to 5,000 members of the Sangha. These monuments testify to the great faith kings, queens and laypeople have had in the Triple Gem.

At Mihintale it was inspiring to read the story of the King's meeting with Venerable Mahinda, son of King Ashoka and the first emissary of Buddhism to Sri Lanka over 2,000 years ago. The King met Ven. Mahinda while out hunting and the first teaching he received was about *ahimsa*: not harming life. The King took it to heart and banned hunting. The Sri Lankan people's respect for animal life has continued to this day and their tolerance towards the mischievous monkeys and many other animals you see all over the country are testaments to this.

The ancient capital city of Anuradhapura is where one of Sri Lanka's most revered holy sites, that of the sacred Bodhi Tree, or Sri Maha Bodhi, is found. It is considered to be the oldest historically documented tree in the world, over 2,200 years old, and the original cutting came from the same Bodhi Tree in Bodhgaya under which the Buddha realized enlightenment. It was taken



From left to right: Ven. Dhammagavesi, Ajahn Karuniko and Ven. Ariyagavesi

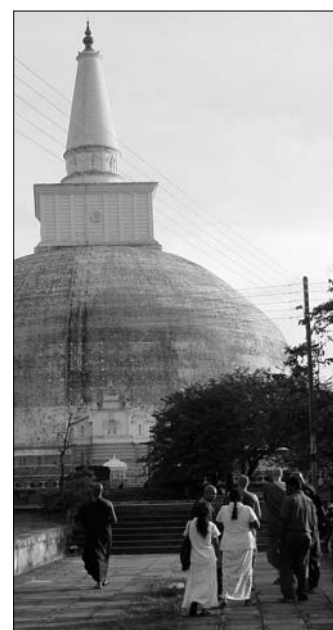
to Sri Lanka by Bhikkhuni Sanghamitta, sister of Ven. Mahinda and daughter of King Ashoka, who was invited there to start a Bhikkhuni Sangha. Despite multitudes of people around, a peaceful atmosphere prevailed as we took the opportunity to chant and meditate.

Anuradhapura is also the home of some colossal stupas, or *dagabas* as they are called in Sinhalese. The largest is the Jetavana Dagaba which when completed was 120 metres high, the third largest monument in the world at its time, the two largest being the Egyptian Pyramids. I was told the bricks that made up this *dagaba* could have built a town of around 8,000 houses. One of the other large *dagabas* was being renovated, and what made this particularly memorable to me was the presence of about 200 teenage students who had come to help with the restoration. The girls, not exactly dressed for the work site in their all-white uniforms, had formed a line to convey bricks and mortar to the boys (slightly advantaged with black trousers) who were up on the scaffolding passing these on to the workers who were laying the bricks. I couldn't help smiling seeing the students helping in this way, and later I wondered what kind of expression would have appeared on the face of one of our Western health and safety officers!

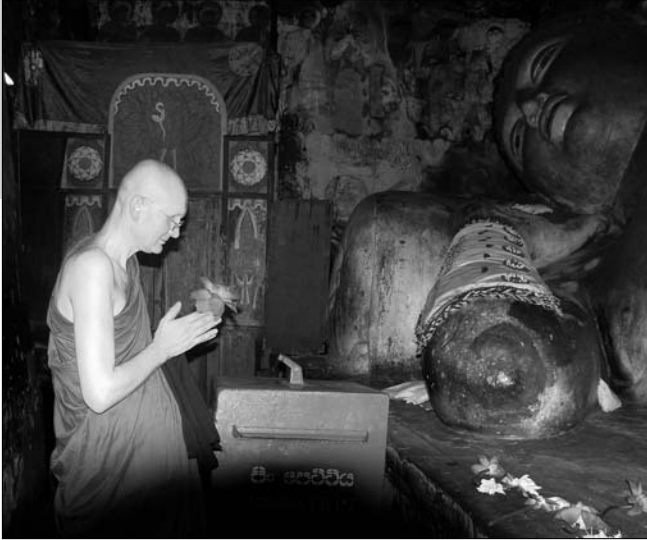
At Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa there are many wonderful ancient monuments to the Buddha, too numerous to write about. However, I have to mention those magnificent Buddha statues at the Gal Vihara in Polonnaruwa so exquisitely carved and well preserved in their different postures in the rock face. The day I visited Polonnaruwa had been hot and humid so in the

early evening I was quite tired. I had decided to write postcards that evening to stay awake as sitting meditation would not have been conducive to 'wakefulness'. Ven. Dhammagavesi then came to invite me to go and meditate by these wonderful statues of the Buddha. By this time all the tourists had gone and, maybe as a privilege offered to *samanas*, the guards allowed us to sit in meditation right next to the statues. It was so awe-inspiring sitting in the company of those great Buddha images that my sleepiness disappeared, and peace and joy ensued.

I so admire the courage and faith of the early Chinese Buddhist pilgrims of the first millennium CE who underwent great hardships to visit the Buddhist holy places, some even losing their lives. Remembering them makes me willing to undergo some hardship myself, and I appreciate how such undertakings can be a source of strength for one's heart and mind. So when I was asked if I would like to make the three to four hour overnight climb to the top of Sri Pada I was enthusiastic. Sri Pada, a mountain also known as Adam's Peak, is a place of pilgrimage for Christians, Hindus and Muslims as well as Buddhists in Sri Lanka. Sometimes the pilgrims chant something from their tradition as they make the climb. But for



Ratnamali Stupa, Anuradhapura



Offerings at the Cave Temple at Dambulla

Buddhists the name Sri Pada refers to a footprint in the rock, attributed to the Buddha on a visit to Sri Lanka.

We set off at around midnight, walking up the thousands of steps which lead to the mountain's peak. With a few stops for rest, we arrived at the summit around 3.30 a.m. Though the climb was tiring and I had a slight headache, just staying mindful of walking, repeating the mantra 'Buddho' with each step and staying conscious of the effort as an act of devotion to the Buddha brought peace and well-being to my mind. Once at the top we were shivering a bit while sitting in meditation by the Buddha's footprint, with a cold wind blowing strong. But it was all gladly bearable in the spirit of pilgrimage. It was a beautiful clear dawn, and the famous pointed shadow of the mountain's triangular peak first appeared faintly in the sky, seemingly like magic, and then moved slowly downwards casting its distinct shape on the land. On the way down I noticed in the light of day several elderly people who had made the climb. We had a brief exchange with one lady who was 73 years old and climbs Sri Pada every year. I imagine she will continue to do so as long as her legs are willing.

Finally I must comment on the kindness and consideration I received from my hosts at Springhill Forest Monastery in Kandy and the other monks and laypeople I met on my travels. The soldiers at the numerous checkpoints we passed usually had a friendly smile for the *sudu sadhu* (white monk), as I was sometimes called especially by the children. Ven. Dhammagavesi worked tirelessly to ensure my comfort and well being. My hosts were very attentive, noticing the things I liked to eat and drink and arranging for such things to mani-



Sri Pada (Adam's Peak) in the background



fest frequently. There were also a few occasions too when I found myself feeling a bit hot in a room which prompted me to look and see if there was a ceiling fan. Without a word said this was noticed and the fan turned on. While staying in Springhill Monastery the monks and laymen would escort me to and from my *kuti* and thoroughly check my feet for leeches before I entered (I only had one leech bite throughout). It was pleasing to see this beautiful quality of respect, or in the Pali language of the Buddha, *garavo* (respect; reverence), an attitude that is encouraged when relating to religious mendicants, teachers and parents. It's a quality I feel is in decline in Western society where our conditioning tends to lean towards self-centredness. But for those who wish to go beyond 'me and mine' and the suffering that ensues, *garavo* is a beautiful quality to cultivate. As the Buddha reflected after his enlightenment, *Dukkham ko agaravo viharati*, 'One who is without reverence dwells unhappily.' As the line from the Mangala Sutta says:

Garavo ca nivato ca santutthi ca kataññuta kalena dhammasavanam etam mangalamuttamam

'Reverence, humility, contentment and gratitude, hearing the Dhamma at the right time, these are of the greatest blessings.' ❁

KATHINA CEREMONIES

2008

CITTAVIVEKA

www.cittaviveka.org

Sunday, 19 October

ARUNA RATANAGIRI

www.ratanagiri.org.uk

Sunday, 26 October

AMARAVATI

www.amaravati.org

Sunday, 2 November

HARTRIDGE

www.hartridgemonastery.org

Sunday, 9 November

– All Welcome –

Kathinas usually begin with an alms-round beginning at 10.30 a.m. Please check monastery websites nearer the time for more details.

Donations to Amaravati Library

Amaravati library is a unique collection of books that have all been donated to the Sangha directly or through dedicated cash donations.

The emphasis of the collection is on Dhamma practice and the space is limited. Therefore, if you are thinking of donating books to the library it may help to know that the priorities are:

- Dhamma teachings and books on Buddhism
- the teachings of other religions, spiritual writers and traditions.
- books revealing Dhamma insights or which support contemplative investigation, whether these are in the form of poetry or another discipline such as science or psychology

The Sangha and lay readers do not generally need access to student textbooks, e.g. law, maths for engineers or antiques. Books are not sold on websites such as e-Bay. Those that are donated to Amaravati that cannot be kept at the monastery, e.g. duplicates, are offered to the other Forest Sangha Monasteries, other Dhamma friends, lay visitors and Oxfam.

If you would like more information about library book donations please contact Caro, the Amaravati librarian, at [library at amaravati dot org](mailto:library@amaravati.org)

INTRODUCTION TO MEDITATION

Workshops at AMARAVATI
Saturday afternoons 2–4 p.m.

Meditation instruction for beginners,
with an opportunity for questions and dialogue
Feel free to come along — no booking is necessary

Classes are in the Bodhinyana Meditation Hall

Portal page:

Internet downloads:

CD distribution:

Sangha newsletter:

Lay community:

Amaravati:

Chithurst:

Harnham:

Devon:

Switzerland:

Italy:

www.forestsangha.org

www.dhammadata.org.uk

www.dhammadata.org

www.fsnewsletter.org

www.buddhacommunity.org

www.amaravati.org

www.cittaviveka.org

www.ratanagiri.org.uk

www.hartridgemonastery.org

www.dhammadata.ch

www.santacittarama.org

Glossary — Some of the Pali and foreign terms used in this issue of the *Forest Sangha Newsletter*

Please note: Due to typographical limitations, Pali diacritics have been omitted throughout the newsletter. Below are brief descriptions of how these words are being used in this issue of the FSN; they are not full definitions. Often used, they have generally not been italicized.

Ajahn (Thai): Senior monk or nun; literally 'teacher'. Used for those with ten vassas or more, regardless of their role in the community.

anagarika : A male or female postulant in the preliminary novitiate stage.

anjali : A gesture of respect by joining palms in front of the heart.

bhikkhu : A Buddhist monk / **bhikkhuni** : A Buddhist nun

Bodhi Tree : The tree under which the Buddha was liberated, or same kind.

Buddha : Awakened One; the perfectly enlightened historical teacher of the Dhamma.

Dhamma : The Truth; the teaching of the Buddha.

Dhamma-vinaya : The Teaching and Training, or Doctrine and Discipline

kathina : An almsgiving ceremony at the end of the vassa.

kuti : A hut; a small dwelling for meditation, usually in the forest.

Luang Por (Thai): A title of affectionate respect (lit. "Venerable Father").

Mahayana: The school of Buddhism mainly practised in Tibet and East Asia.

metta : Loving-kindness.

parittas : Blessing chants; a particular collection of the Buddha's words.

puja : Devotional observances such as chanting and offering incense.

samadhi : concentration; unshakeable presence of mind.

samana: One who has entered the Holy life; religious recluse or wanderer.

samanera : A novice monk.

Sangha : The community of ordained Buddhist monks and nuns; Those who have realized liberation (Ariya Sangha)

siladhara : A Buddhist nun from the community of Luang Por Sumedho.

stupa : Pagoda; a devotional monument often enshrining holy relics.

sutra (Sanskrit) (**Pali: sutta**): A discourse by the Buddha or his disciples.

Theravada : The school of Buddhism mainly practised in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Burma, Laos and Cambodia.

Triple Gem : The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.

tudong : austere contemplative wandering, relying on faith and meditation.

Vassa : The three-month summer "Rains Retreat"; a mark of how many years ("vassas") a monk or nun has been in robes.

vihara : A monastic dwelling.

Vinaya : The monastic discipline.

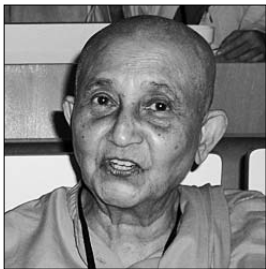
GRAPEVINE



AMARAVATI

News from Amaravati

The period between the winter retreat and the Vassa is always one of relative movement, and accordingly the resident community at Amaravati has been flexible at any given time this past April, May and June. Besides some minor building projects starting up (including new kuti foundations around the edges of the field), there has not been much going on. Some members of the community joined the recent talks in Nottingham by the Dalai Lama in May. We have also had the pleasure of receiving visits from a few Sangha elders from abroad, including Ajahn Jayasaro from Thailand, Bhikkhuni Dr. Kusuma from Sri Lanka, and Tan Ajahn Jundee, Ajahn Nyanadhammo and Tan Moshe, also from Thailand.



Bhikkhuni Kusuma

Luang Por Sumedho will be back from America on July 15, after teaching at Spirit Rock and staying for some weeks with the Sangha at Abhayagiri.

Family events

Family Camp: August 16–25th

To book for these three events please contact: David Lillywhite

147 Whyteladies Lane, Cookham, Berkshire, SL6 9LF, UK – Tel: (+44) (0)1628 810 083
email: daddydavid@talktalk.net

Young Person Retreat: November 21–23rd

Creative Retreat: December 19–21st

Booking forms and further information about these and all family events can be downloaded from www.family.amaravati.org

or contact: familyevents@amaravati.org

Amaravati lay events 2008

Amaravati Lay Buddhist Association (ALBA): These events provide an opportunity to practise together and explore themes relevant to daily life. Events are led by experienced lay-teachers. All are welcome.

Days of Practice (DoP) – no need to book 9.45 a.m. for 10–5 p.m. (Please bring food to share)

Retreats – advanced booking essential 5.30 p.m. Fri. – 4 p.m. on the last day.

August	9	DoP (Alison)
September	6	DoP (Martin)
October	17–19	Weekend Retreat (Martin)
November	1	DoP (Nick)
December	6	DoP (Chris)

Please check for late programme changes on our website: www.buddhacommunity.org

Retreat booking forms may be downloaded from there.

Buddhist Women's Network

Weekend Retreat, 26–27 July, at Amaravati Retreat Centre.

Saturday, from 9.45 am – 5 pm:

Speaking Our Truth, led by Chris Blain.

Sunday, from 9.45 am – 3 pm:

Open Space.

All women welcome. Come for one or two days. (Please bring food to share). For details, or to book overnight accommodation, contact Jenni Jepson (01986 895083)

jennijepson@yahoo.co.uk

or Shirley McDonald (01622 203751)

shirleymcd@blueyonder.co.uk.

Annual women's retreat at Little Gidding:

3–5 October. *Touching the Earth*,

led by Chris Blain.

For details, contact Jenni (see above).

Sunday 7 December:

Day retreat at Amaravati, from 10–5 pm.

Led by Jenni Jepson.

Lay resident opportunities

Groundskeeper

The position of Groundskeeper is now available for a one year period, and perhaps beyond that. If you have an interest to live and practise with the monastic community at Amaravati for a year or more, please contact the Monastery Secretary.

Our current groundskeeper, Josh, is planning on taking a sabbatical from the job he has done so well for the past five years, and he will be happy to introduce you to the job and 'train you up'. While we are looking for a minimum commitment of one year, and it is possible Josh will return to the job after that time, we will need someone in a more general helping role related to the grounds and driving and perhaps maintenance assistance (see next item), so it should be possible to stay on in a similar capacity anyway should you wish to apply for a longer stay.

Please contact the Monastery Secretary:

monasterysecretary@amaravati.org

or phone on (01442)842-455

Assistant Groundskeeping/

Driving/General help

A position for a general helper is also available, mainly assisting with the grounds, driving, and maintenance work. If you have an interest to live and practise with the monastic community for a year or more, please contact the Monastery Secretary at:

monasterysecretary@amaravati.org

or phone on (01442)842-455

Retreat Centre manager

There will be a vacancy for Household/Maintenance manager from October 2008.

Some DIY experience is necessary and we are looking for a minimum commitment of one year. If you are interested please email/write to the Retreat Centre, at Amaravati.

GRAPEVINE

ARUNA RATANAGIRI

Retreats

Spaces are still available for the Mens' Retreat 18–24 October, led by Ven. Ajahn Sumedho.

Contact Kath Ann Jones at:

kusalaretreats08@gmail.com

or by phone at +44 (0)120 728-3361

or see: www.kusalahouse.org

Walking Retreat at The Sneep,

Tarset, Northumbria, 14–20 September 2008.

Led by Ajahn Abhinando. The format will consist of 3 full days meditation alternating with 3 full days walking in the Northumberland hills. For information and booking please contact Micky Macgregor at mm@gibsonsolicitors.co.uk or by post at The Sneep, Tarset, Hexham, Northumberland NE48 1RN.



Tan Ajahn Jundee, a senior Thai monk who trained with Luang Por Chah and now has his own branch monastery in Chonburi, Thailand, visited Amaravati, Cittaviveka and Aruna Ratanagiri monasteries in June. Accompanying him was Ajahn Nyanadhammo, a senior Australian monk and abbot of another monastery in Thailand, and Ven. Moshe.

Sunday Afternoon Dhamma Talks at Amaravati

Sundays in the Sala, 2–4 p.m.

– refreshments will be served –

- 20 July – Ajahn Sumedho
The end of doubt
- 27 July – Ajahn Sumedho
The means to a full life
- 3 August – Ajahn Sumedho
Happiness and its causes
- 10 August – Sangha Member
Resources and renunciation
- 17 August – Ajahn Sumedho
Good, evil and the way it is
- 24 August – Ajahn Sumedho
Peace in a world of conflict
- 31 August – Ajahn Sumedho
Being busy being still
- 7 September – Ajahn Sumedho
Do we need religion?
- 14 September – Sangha Member
What are spiritual friends for?
- 21 September – Sangha Member
Is hope an illusion?
- 28 September – Ajahn Sumedho
Why bother – it's all on the Internet
- 5 October – Ajahn Sumedho
Suffering is the door
- 12 October – Ajahn Sumedho
Gratitude to parents

CITTAVIVEKA

News from Chithurst

After the winter retreat, as the weather warms, it becomes the migrant season for the Sangha in general. Life at Cittaviveka reflects the theme of wandering that is one of the roots of the *samana* tradition, lived out by the Buddha and kept going in the current era by the forest traditions of SE Asia. Such practices keep us in touch with homelessness, with living simply and developing resilience and faith. Groups of *samanas* have been living out 'on the road' – Ajahn Karuniko and Ven. Dhammarakkho in Crete in April, Ajahn Thanuttaro and Ven. Jinavamso in Dorset and Devon in June, and Ajahn Kovida and Sr Brahmavara in the south-west in that same month. Meanwhile Ajahn Sucitto was in the USA for a month teaching at centres in the north-east, while Ajahn Thanasanti was in the USA for six weeks. She was joined by Ajahn Upekkha to co-teach a retreat in Washington followed by teaching in California and discussion of the California nuns' monastery project. Following their return, Ajahn Thitamedha returned to her native Russia to offer a retreat in Moscow. So the presence of the community in the monastery has been pretty fluid.

However we all came back to base for this year's annual Tort Pa Ba, which is an occasion for offering funds for the Cloister and to pay off the debt on the Rocana Vihara. This grand get-together is a traditional way of creating a harmonious lay community and supporting the monastery through such an event – everyone can get together around the theme of generosity and respect for the Triple Gem, and people get to make new friends, strengthen old ties, and resolve any differences. Originally organized by the Thai and

Lao communities, it now includes British, Cambodian, Sri Lankan, Burmese, Chinese and Japanese (around 500 people at a rough count). For the occasion, we were also pleased to receive monks and nuns from Amaravati who added their support.

This season has also brought in some very welcome visitors: Ajahn Piyasilo came over from Thailand in May and stayed until July. Ajahn Jayasaro came through for a few days in early June, and another ex-abbot of Wat Pah Nanachat, Ajahn Nyanadhammo, visited a week or so afterwards. Ajahn Nyanadhammo brought with him Tan Ajahn Jundee, who is abbot of one of the branches of Wat Pah Pong in Thailand, and Ajahn Jundee offered reflections and memories of Luang Por Chah at the vigil on Luang Por Chah's birthday on June 17th. Their visits brought a sense of connectedness to a tradition that is both global as well as flavoured with the earthiness of the culture of rural Thailand, and were all too short, but served as useful reminders of a Way that has been lived for centuries.

Also around the middle of June, Cittaviveka hosted a Sangha Forum, a lightly-organized two-day get-together of bhikkhus and siladhara aimed at stimulating and improving dialogue around topics of interest in the Holy Life.

After all this moving around, we settle down for the Vassa with a group retreat, followed by study of Dhamma-vinaya and opportunities for solitary meditation practice. After Vassa, the Kathina season begins – Cittaviveka's is on 19 October – with further occasions for enriching our sense of sharing in a widespread fellowship.

Gratitude to Parents Day Amaravati

Sunday October 12th 2008

— everyone welcome —

11 am – Offering alms & Paritta chanting
2 pm – Dhamma Talk by Ajahn Sumedho
in the Temple, then tea and discussion.

BODHINYANARAMA

News from Wellington

For Vassa we will be four monks, two anagarikas and four lay supporters. Since this is 'winter' in the southern hemisphere we will be having a retreat time, with everyone taking a six week silent retreat.

ABHAYAGIRI

News from Redwood Valley

Life at Abhayagiri Monastery alternates between periods of stillness and activity. Since the end of the winter retreat the past months have been marked by a number of visits by fellow Sangha members and a return to the 'normal' routine of maintaining and developing the monastery.

On April 7, Ajahn Sudanto returned from Vimutti Monastery in New Zealand, where he had spent the winter. During his time there, Ajahn Sudanto helped the abbot, Ajahn Chandako, finalize the design and begin construction on an octagonal yurt, and contributed to the Vimutti Monastery website.

Tan Ñaniko completed his fifth rains retreat last October, thereby becoming a *majjhima* (middle) bhikkhu. He decided to return to Thailand where he spent his third rains-retreat-year to deepen his meditation practice and walk *tudong*. He plans to spend at least two years in Thailand.

Two planned changes to the Abhayagiri community include Ian Hillard's anagarika Going Forth in early July, and Anagarika Nic's Samanera *pabbajja* (Going Forth) on July 8. His longtime mentor Bhante Gunaratana plans to be here during that time, a visit that we are all looking forward to. May 22 saw what we believe to be the largest gathering of bhikkhus yet at Abhayagiri. They came to participate in the ordination of Abhayagiri's newest bhikkhu, Venerable Cunda. Three senior monks in the Ajahn Chah tradition arrived days before the event: Ajahn Jayanto from Amaravati Monastery, Ajahn Kusalo, the second monk at Tisarana Monastery in Ottawa, and Ajahn Sona from Birken Monastery. The most senior monk in attendance was Ajahn Mahaprasert from Wat Buddhansorn, the Thai temple in Fremont. Rev. Heng Sure from the Berkeley Buddhist Monastery and Ven. Jin Yong from the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas represented the Chinese Buddhist



View from within the mould. Ajahn Vimalo's rubber Prajna Paramita mould from the inside

tradition. Including the eleven bhikkhus resident at Abhayagiri and Ajahn Mahaprasert's attendant, a total of eighteen fully-ordained monks participated in Tan Cunda's *upasampada* (ordination).

On April 7, Ajahn Amaro departed Abhayagiri to begin a six-week excursion to Europe. His trip began with four days of meetings at Amaravati. After spending time with family in England, he travelled to Santacittarama Monastery in Rieti, Italy. While in Italy, he visited Rome and Padua and led a five-day silent retreat. He then returned to England to begin an eighteen-day *tudong* (walking pilgrimage) with Nick Scott to honour the 25th anniversary of their walk from Chithurst to Harnham in 1983. They retraced several portions of the 1983 route and reconnected with many people who had aided their original journey, some of whom recollected how the initial pilgrimage had spurred their interest in Buddha-Dhamma.

From June 23 to June 27, Ajahn Pasanno, Ajahn Amaro, and Tan Sampajano along with Ajahn Candasiri and Ajahn Anandabodhi attended the Western Buddhist Monastic Gathering held at Shasta Abbey. The gathering's formal sessions focused on the education and training of newcomers to monastic culture, but the Abhayagiri attendees found informal discussions with fellow monks and nuns to be of even greater value. They were impressed by the sincerity and dedication of monastic practitioners from other Buddhist traditions.

The highlight of the summer was Luang Por Sumedho's visit to Abhayagiri in June.

Luang Por arrived in San Diego in late May where he visited his parent's grave and Metta Forest Monastery. He began teaching a ten-day retreat at Spirit Rock on June 6, with Ajahn Amaro, the Amaravati siladharas Ajahn Candasiri and Ajahn Anandabodhi and five Abhayagiri residents. After the retreat they then travelled to Abhayagiri. Ten Spirit Rock teachers visited Abhayagiri and conferred with Luang Por from June 18 to June 20, and board members of Saranaloka (the foundation supporting siladharas in the United States) met with him on June 21. Luang Por also generously offered two Dhamma talks while staying here, as well as a public talk at nearby City of Ten Thousand Buddhas.

The long-awaited Dhamma Hall renovation project began in mid-April. The Abhayagiri residents held evening *pujas* at Casa Serena (the monastery's residence for women) for the duration of this project, which was completed in time for Ajahn Amaro's return on May 17.

During the month of May, monastery residents often noticed heavy machinery rumbling up the Abhayagiri hill. Two new roads were created in the forest to enable present and future *kuti* construction. Shortly after the roads were finished builders broke ground on two new *kutis*: an elder's cabin at the end of the road and a monk's *kuti* just below the ordination platform. The Abhayagiri community works in conjunction with professionals to build these new dwellings, with residents doing a large share of the work on the monk's cabin.

CONTACTS AND PRACTICE VENUES

AMARAVATI RETREATS

ENGLAND

Bath	Anne Armitage	(01225) 859219
Banbury	Sarah Wallis	(01295) 278744
Bedford	David Stubbs	(01234) 720892
Berkshire	Anthea West	(01189) 798101
Brentwood Buddhist Society:		
	Richard Burch	(01277) 626225
Brighton	Sam Halter	(07888) 821524
Bristol	Lisa Daix	(0117) 935 0272
Cambridge	Dan Jones	(01223) 246257
Canterbury	Charles Watters	(01227) 463342
Carlisle	Jean Nelson	(01228) 546259
Chichester	Tony Halter	(01243) 672126
Cookham, nr. Maidenhead		
	Emily Tomalin or David Lillywhite	(01628) 810083
Hemel Hempstead Bodhinyana Group:		
	Chris Ward	(01442) 890034
Kendal Fellside Centre, Low Fellside:		
	Sumedha	(01539) 729793
Leeds Area		
	Daniela Loeb	(01132) 791375
	Anne Grimshaw	(01274) 691447
Liverpool	Ursula Haeckel	(0151) 427 6668
London Hampstead, 1 Hillside (Rm. 6)		
	London NW5, (Entrance in Highgate Rd):	
	Caroline Randall	(0208) 348 0537
	Ann Booth	(0207) 485 0505
London Buddhist Society,		
	58 Eccleston Square, London SW1	(0207) 834 5858
Leigh-on-sea	Liamanda Webb	(01268) 654923
Newcastle	Ian Plagaró-Neill	(0191) 469 2778
Newent-Gloucs.	John Teire	(01531) 821902
	email: john.teire at virgin dot net	
Newmarket	Richard & Rosie Pragnell	(01638) 603286
	email: rpragnell at gmail dot com	
Norwich	Robert Coggan	(01953) 451741
Penzance	Lee	(01736) 762135
Portsmouth	Medhavi	(02392) 732280
Redruth	Vanessa	(01209) 214031
Sheffield	Greg Bradshaw	(0114) 262 1559
	email: greg.bradshaw at btclick dot com	
South Dorset	Barbara Cohen (Sati-sati)	(01305) 786821
Southampton	Robert Elliot	(02380) 612838
Steving, Sussex	Jayanti	(01903) 812130
Stroud	John Groves	(07967) 777742
Surrey-Woking	Rocana	(01483) 761398
Taunton	Annie Fisher	(01278) 457245
Teeside	John Doyle	(01642) 587274
Totnes	James Whelan	(01803) 865667

OUTSIDE ENGLAND

Co. Clare, Ireland: Sunyata Centre		(+353) 61 367 073
Cork, Ireland	Paddy Boyle	(+353) 21 462 2964
Dublin	Rupert Westrup	(+353) 01 280 2832
Edinburgh	Neil Howell	(0131) 226 5044
Glasgow	James Scott	(0141) 637 9731
Machynlleth, Wales	Angela Llewellyn	(0165) 051 1350
Pembrokeshire, S. Wales		
	Peter & Barbara (Subhadra) Jackson	(01239) 820790
A Coruna, Spain	David Williams	(+34) (981) 432 718

Retreat in France with Ajahn Sundara

31 October – 3 November 2008

Domaine de Saint Laurent, 71250 Château, FRANCE

Contact : [mhd-abt at club-internet dot fr](mailto:mhd-abt@club-internet dot fr)

Association Vivekarama

Retreat Schedule 2008

R8	18–20	July	Weekend	*Ajahn Santacitta
R9	1–5	August	5 Days	*Ajahn Jayanto
R10	12–24	Sept.	13 Days	*Luang Por Sumedho
R11	3–12	October	10 Days	*Ajahn Candasiri
R12	24–28	October	5 Days	*Ajahn Anandabodhi
R13	7–16	Nov.	10 Days	*Ajahn Sucitto
R14	28–30	Nov.	Weekend	*Ajahn Karuniko
R15	12–14	Dec.	Weekend	Ajahn Thitamedha
R16	27–1	Jan 2009	6 Days	*Ajahn Sundara

*Retreat full: waiting list in operation **Retreat full: waiting list closed

General Guidelines

All weekend retreats are suitable for beginners. It is advisable to do a weekend retreat before doing a longer retreat.

Booking Procedure

Bookings are only accepted on receipt of a completed booking form, which can be obtained by:

- Downloading from the website;
- Emailing or writing to the Retreat Centre.

Please note that bookings **cannot** be made over the telephone.

Start and Finish Times

Registration is from 16.00 – 19.00 on the first day of the retreat. The orientation talk is at 19.15. Weekend retreats end at 16.00, longer retreats at lunchtime. Attendance is expected for the whole retreat.

Donations

No advance booking fee is required. The Retreat Centre is funded solely through donations. Donations are invited at the end of the retreat.

Contact Information

Retreat Centre, Amaravati Buddhist Monastery, Great Gaddesden, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP1 3BZ UK

Telephone: +44 (0)1442 843 239

Email: [retreats at amaravati dot org](mailto:retreats@amaravati dot org)

Website (for updated information): www.amaravati.org

KUSALA HOUSE RETREATS 2008

☉ Summer Retreat ☼ 3–9 August

A summer retreat will be offered from 3–9 August, led by **Ajahn Munindo & Ajahn Abhinando**. *WAITING LIST ONLY*

☉ Women's Retreat ☼ 26–30 September

A retreat for women will be offered from 26–30 September, led by **Ajahn Candasiri**. *FULLY BOOKED*

☉ Men's Retreat ☼ 18–24 October

A retreat for men will be offered from 18–24 October, led by **Ven. Ajahn Sumedho**.

Kusala House, Harnham, Aruna Ratanagiri Monastery.

For information and booking contact Kath Ann Jones at:

[kusalaretreats08 at gmail dot com](mailto:kusalaretreats08@gmail dot com)

or by phone at +44 (0120) 728–3361

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FOREST SANGHA Newsletter



If undelivered, please return to: AMARAVATI MONASTERY
St. Margaret's, Great Gaddesden, Hemel Hempstead,
HERTS. HP1 3BZ, England, U.K.

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OBSERVANCE DAYS	Moon phase ● HALF ○ FULL ● HALF ● NEW				
These days are traditionally given over to quiet reflection and meditation. Visitors are welcome: contact the individual monasteries for specifics, as routines vary.	JULY	10 (Thu)	17 (Thu)*	25 (Fri)	1 (Fri) [Aug.]
	AUGUST	9 (Sat)	16 (Sat)	24 (Sun)	30 (Sat)
	SEPTEMBER	7 (Sun)	14 (Sun)	22 (Mon)	29 (Mon)
	OCTOBER	7 (Tue)	14 (Tue)*	17 (Thu)	25 (Fri)
	* Asalha Puja (Vassa begins the next day)		* Pavarana Day		

ASSOCIATED MONASTERIES

BRITAIN

Amaravati Monastery
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Office:
Tel: +44 (0144) 284 2455
Fax: (0144) 284 3721
Retreat Info: 284 3239
www.amaravati.org
Stewards: *English Sangha Trust*

Aruna Ratanagiri
Harnham Buddhist Monastery
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Tel: +44 (0166) 188 1612
Fax: (0166) 188 1019
www.ratanagiri.org.uk
sangha@ratanagiri.org.uk
Stewards: *Magga Bhavaka Trust*

Cittaviveka
Chithurst Buddhist Monastery
Chithurst, Petersfield, Hampshire GU31 5EU
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Fax: (0173) 081 7334
www.cittaviveka.org
Stewards: *English Sangha Trust*

Hartridge Monastery
Upottery, Honiton, Devon EX14 9QE
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www.hartridgemonastery.org
Stewards: *Devon Vihara Trust*

ITALY
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Stewards: *Santacittarama Association*

SWITZERLAND
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Tel: 033 / 6 752 100
Fax: 033 / 6 752 241
www.dhammapala.org
Stewards: *Dhammapala 31921-201-5*

U.S.A.

Abhayagiri Monastery
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Tel: +1 (707) 485 1630
Fax: +1 (707) 485 7948
www.abhayagiri.org
Stewards: *Sanghapala Foundation*

CANADA
Tisarana Buddhist Monastery
1356 Powers Road, RR #3 Perth, Ontario K7H 3C5
Tel: +1 (613) 264 8208
www.tisarana.ca
Stewards: *Tisarana Buddhist Monastery*

Arrow River Forest Hermitage
Box 2, RR 7, Site 7 Thunder Bay, Ontario P7C 5V5
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www.arrowriver.ca

Birken Forest Monastery
PO Box 5 Knutsford, B.C. V0E 2A0
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AUSTRALIA

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Fax: +61 (08) 95 253 420

Bodhivana Monastery
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Fax: +61 (0) 359 665 998

Dhammaloka Buddhist Centre(Perth)
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Tel: +61 (08) 9345 1711
Fax: +61 (08) 9344 4220
www.bswa.org.au
Stewards: *Buddhist Society of Western Australia*

Santi Forest Monastery
Lot 6 Coalmines Road, PO Box 132 Bundanoon, 2578 NSW
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fax: +61 (0)2 8572 8286
website: <http://santifm1.0.googlepages.com>
email: santioffice@gmail.com

NEW ZEALAND

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17 Rakau Grove, Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt 5019,
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PO Box 7 Bombay 2343
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www.vimutti.org.nz
Stewards: *Auckland Theravada Buddhist Association*

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Wat Pah Nanachat
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